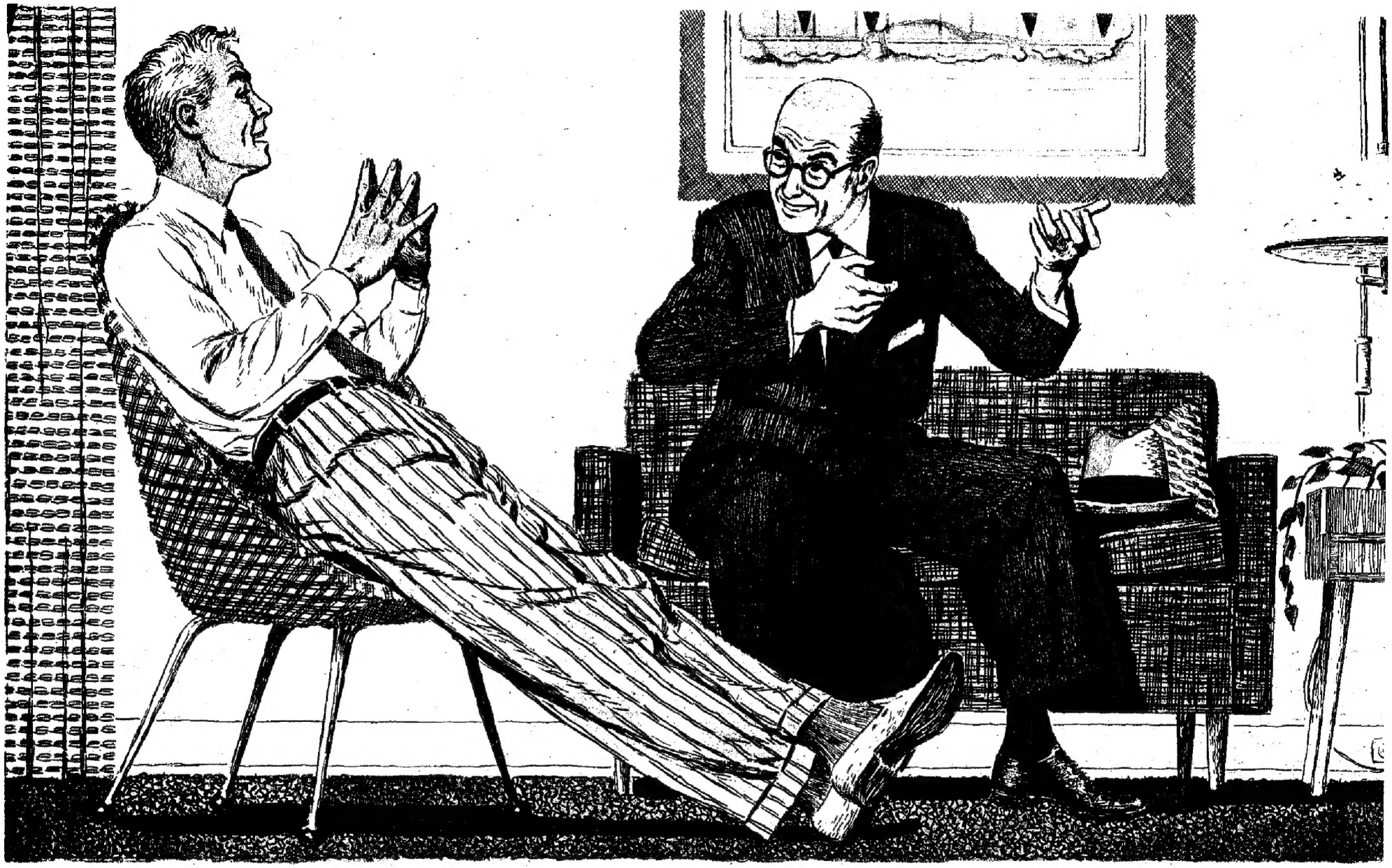
NOTE: This newspaper appearance was divided to fill 8 ½" x 11" pages, roughly in the manner shown below.

Saline Solution 2



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Solino

"HER name is Sibyl Logan," I said. "And she's determined to be in love with me. I figure she's about 17 or 18."

"Yes, dear," my wife, Arlene, said. "Is tuna casserole all right for supper?"

"I can endure it," I said. I tamped tobacco into my pipe and lit it. "Sh-

Mr. Logan was a big man with mild blue eyes. He put out his hand. "Pleased to meet you, Mr. Roberts. Nice weather we're having. Good for hunting."

His wife tapped him on the arm. "Now, dear," she said. "We aren't supposed to be too friendly. Remember what Elaine said." Sh-

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Saline Solution

Wife's Lack of Jealousy Perturbs Teacher More Than Girl's Crush on Him

By Jack Ritchie

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE L. CONNELLY

"HER name is Sibyl Logan," I said. "And she's determined to be in love with me. I figure she's about 17 or 18."

"Yes, dear," my wife, Arlene, said. "Is tuna casserole all right for supper?"

"I can endure it," I said. I tamped tobacco into my pipe and lit it. "She insists on following me around the campus. Every time I look back, there she is, leaning against a tree and looking pathetic."

I waited until my match was cool and then dropped it into the wastebasket under the kitchen sink. "All I want to be is a harmless college instructor. I detest these complications that make you so insanely jealous."

"Not a bone of jealousy in my body," Arlene said, grinning. "I'm always calm and unruffled. I take the mature attitude."

"I like that in you," I said. "I admire that firmly. And at the same time it hurts."

I studied her. "Where did you get that bruise on your cheek?"

She touched it lightly. "I happened to be in the way when I opened the refrigerator door this morning."

The front doorbell rang and I left the kitchen to answer it. My smile froze when I saw Sibyl Logan and a middle-aged couple.

Sibyl smiled wanly. "My parents. But they learned nothing from me. My lips are sealed."

Mr. Logan was a big man with mild blue eyes. He put out his hand. "Pleased to meet you, Mr. Roberts. Nice weather we're having. Good for hunting."

His wife tapped him on the arm. "Now, dear," she said. "We aren't supposed to be too friendly. Remember what Elvira said." She turned to me and smiled. "Elvira's my older sister, you know."

My wife joined me at the door and Mr. Logan removed his hat politely.

"Sibyl wasn't eating right," Mrs. Logan said. "Not even tuna casserole, and that's her favorite. Elvira noticed and she asked among Sibyl's girl friends. She found out that Sibyl is in love with your husband, Mrs. Roberts." Mrs. Logan smiled. "I guess we're supposed to see what this is all about or something, weren't we, Fred? That's what Elvira said."

"I don't care too much for that casserole myself," Mr. Logan said. "It's always too salty."

Sibyl met my eyes and spoke softly. "Whither thou goest, I will go. Thy people shall be my people."

"If you'll look that up," I said, "you'll find that Ruth was talking to her mother-in-law. My mother happens to be in Emporia, Kan. But if you've really got your mind set . . ."

"For the time being," my wife said, "suppose we all go into the living-room."

When we were all seated, Arlene

turned to Mrs. Logan. "Do you use potato chips?"

Mrs. Logan nodded genially. "Oh, yes. One cup of crushed potato chips. That's what the recipe calls for."

Sibyl frowned. "Mother, don't you remember why we came here? I believe we were going to have a scene or

My wife's voice was cold. "You still haven't answered this delightful child's question."

"You wouldn't believe this," I said to the Logans. "But my wife doesn't have a jealous bone in her body. Take X-rays, if you like."

Mrs. Logan was thoughtful. "But

"Have his teeth looked after regularly," Arlene said. "I'm afraid though that, despite everything, in a year or two . . ."

"Now look here," I said. "I have perfectly sound . . ."

"Quiet," my wife said frigidly. She smiled at Sibyl. "He's always in the

was perfectly miserable when our dog ran away."

"I just remembered," Sibyl said. "I'm under-age. A mere child of 17. I'm immature. Emotionally, that is," she added hastily. "Besides, my parents would never give their consent."

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"Of course, dear." Mrs. Logan turned to her husband. "Were you supposed to sock Mr. Roberts? For philandering? Or was it for not paying any attention at all to Sibyl?"

"Now you know I never had any such thought," Mr. Logan said, slightly hurt. "That was Elvira's idea."

Mrs. Logan smiled at me gently. "Poor Elvira. She did so want to be here with us, but she sprained her ankle this afternoon. She was furious."

"Have you ever tried substituting half a cup of cornflakes for half of the potato chips?" Arlene asked.

Mrs. Logan beamed. "Why, Mrs. Roberts, that's a wonderful idea."

Sibyl met my eyes. "Have you been happy with this woman? I mean really happy?"

There was silence while I rubbed my jaw.

"Well?" my wife asked finally. "Answer the question."

"I'm thinking about it," I said defensively. I smiled at Mrs. Logan. "Have you tried soaking the potato chips overnight? I'll guarantee that will take out the salt."

My wife's voice was cold. "You still haven't answered this delightful child's question."

"You wouldn't believe this," I said to the Logans. "But my wife doesn't have a jealous bone in her body. Take X-rays, if you like."

Mrs. Logan was thoughtful. "But wouldn't that destroy their crispness?"

"There is only one solution to this dilemma," I said. "You two girls will just have to share me. After all, half a loaf is better than none."

"I believe in compromise," Mr. Logan said. "That's why I got a double-barreled shotgun for hunting. One barrel full choke and the other modified. Covers most situations you run up against in the field."

My wife glared at me for half a minute and then turned to Sibyl. "I'll bet you can't even cook."

Sibyl smiled. "In my case, it wouldn't be necessary."

My wife breathed deeply a couple of times and then became deadly calm. "All right, dear girl. You can have him."

Sibyl blinked. "You mean . . . " She snapped her fingers. "Just like that?"

Arlene nodded. "Do take good care of him though. He's not as young as he used to be."

"None of us is," Mr. Logan said happily. "But the best is yet to be."

"Browning," I said mechanically.

He shook his head. "Winchester. Sixteen gauge. A sweet little gun."

"Have his teeth looked after regularly," Arlene said. "I'm afraid though that, despite everything, in a year or two . . . "

"Now look here," I said. "I have perfectly sound . . . "

"Quiet," my wife said frigidly. She smiled at Sibyl. "He's always in the best of temper. Usually, that is," she added slowly.

Sibyl's eyes went to the bruise on Arlene's cheek and widened.

"It's really nothing," Arlene said. "He doesn't hit very hard." She laughed self-consciously. "Oh, dear. I shouldn't have said that. I'll destroy his faith in himself."

"I hit as hard as anybody," I said aggressively. "It's just that you were moving away at the time."

"Come to think of it," Mrs. Logan said, "it was Elvira who gave me the recipe. She always was a great one for salty foods."

"He's in good condition otherwise," my wife said. "As long as he takes his pills."

I got to my feet. "I guess I might as well pack a suitcase. I'll send a truck over for the tonics in the morning."

"Now just a minute," Sibyl said quickly. "I can see that I've been selfish about this. I haven't been thinking of how you must feel about this, Mrs. Roberts. After all, you're used to him."

My wife daubed at her eyes. "I'll miss him for a few days, of course. I was perfectly miserable when our dog ran away."

"I just remembered," Sibyl said. "I'm under-age. A mere child of 17. I'm immature. Emotionally, that is," she added hastily. "Besides, my parents would never give their consent."

Mrs. Logan's eyes clouded with thought. "Didn't we celebrate her 18th birthday last week, Fred?"

Mr. Logan rocked back and forth on his heels, chewing on his lower lip reflectively. "I can't be sure, dear. But Elvira would know."

Sibyl was on her feet. "It's been nice meeting you, but we must run along. We simply must."

"Look me up any time," Mr. Logan said. "Did you say you've got a Browning? Fine gun."

When they were gone, my wife leaned against the door for a moment and closed her eyes. Then she looked at me. "Well?"

"I'm happy with you," I said. "Superlatively."

She sighed with pleasure and some relief. "I'll fix supper. But I'm afraid you'll have to go to the store for some cornflakes. I'm all out."

"I don't know," I said dubiously. "Seems damp outside and you know what that does for my rheumatism. I'm not a spring rooster any more."

Arlene smiled. "Perhaps if I just soaked the potato chips for a while?"

I went to the store.

THE END